

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY	Bulgaria	REPORT	
SUBJECT	Vaccine Production and Epidemics	DATE DISTR.	28 October 1954
		NO. OF PAGES	2 25X1
DATE OF INFO.		REQUIREMENT NO.	RD
PLACE ACQUIRED		REFERENCES	
This is UNEVALUATED			25X1

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1. The Institute za Narodno Zdrave, located at Ulitza Zaimov 26 in Sofia, is the only establishment in Bulgaria engaged in the production of immunizing substances (sera). The director is Andrey Popov. There are no Soviet advisers, experts, or other officials at the Institute; research and production are controlled exclusively by Bulgarian officials. Four Soviet physicians worked in the Institute for a short time in 1949, but they have returned to the USSR. The production of immunizing substances and the quality of the products is controlled by a special department in the Ministry of Health headed by Doctor Khadzidimova.
2. There have been no cases of unsuitable sera produced in the Institute during recent years. The last such case was in 1949 when some diphtheria and cholera sera, faultily produced, were distributed and used with disastrous consequences.¹ A number of employees of the Institute were arrested at that time, among them a Doctor Todorov. He was later released and is now director of a laboratory in Ruse.
2. A system for the exchange of immunizing substances, for the purpose of additional control of their composition and efficacy, has been worked out. Sera produced in Bulgaria are sent for examination to laboratories in the USSR, Poland, and Hungary. Rumanian, Hungarian, and Albanian products are examined at the Institute in Sofia. Sera against spotted typhus (Typhus Exendimaticus) are not produced in Bulgaria; recent consignments of this substance arrived from Hungary. Sera against diphtheria were imported in 1953 from Poland and Hungary.
4. There was a diphtheria epidemic in Sofia and Plovdiv between September and November 1953. About 600 persons, mostly children, contracted the disease in Sofia and approximately the same number in Plovdiv. The death rate was 4 per cent in Sofia and 2.5-3 per cent in Plovdiv, mostly children between one and a half and seven years of age. About 15,000 children under the age of seven were immunized. Two emergency hospitals with 250 beds each were opened, one in the Todor Minkov School and one in another school in the Lozenets district in Sofia.

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- 2 -

25X1

5. Approximately 2,000 children were affected by a scarlet fever epidemic in Plovdiv in September-October 1953. The death rate was less than 0.5 per cent. Scarlet fever epidemics recur in Sofia and other urban areas every summer, though the number of cases in recent years has been on the decrease. The following figures on the scarlet fever epidemics in Sofia are known:

1947	-	6,000 children
1948	-	3,000 "
1949	-	2,500 "
1950	-	3,000 "
1951	-	3,500 "
1952	-	4,000 "
1953	-	2,500 "

25X1

6. Epidemic hepatitis was contracted by at least 30 to 40 per cent of the children and by a small number of adults who are infected by the children. It is allegedly caused by the serum with which children are vaccinated against measles. Some changes were effected in the production of this serum, and the number of children affected decreased in 1953-54 as a consequence.

7.

8. Doctor Michev (fnu), the head of the new Bulgarian medical mission of 40 physicians which left for Korea in February 1954, was formerly head of the department controlling the pharmaceutical industry in the Ministry of Health. He served as a Brigadier in Spain and was in the USSR during World War II.

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1. **Comment:** reports distribution of below-standard vaccine which caused a number of fatal accidents as recently as early 1954.

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